

and other family-group names based on *Cacosternum*, whenever their type genera are placed in the same family-group taxon;

- (b) CACOSTERNINAE Noble, 1931 (type genus *Cacosternum* Boulenger, 1887) with the endorsement that it and other family-group names based on *Cacosternum* are to be given precedence over HEMIMANTIDAE Hoffman, 1878 (type genus *Hemimantis* Peters, 1863) and other family-group names based on *Hemimantis*, but are not to be given priority over PETROPEDETINAE Noble, 1931 (type genus *Petropedetes* Reichenow, 1874) and other family-group names based on *Petropedetes*, whenever their type genera are placed in the same family-group taxon;
- (c) PHRYNOBATRACHINAE Laurent, 1941 (type genus *Phrynobatrachus* Günther, 1862) with the endorsement that it and other family-group names based on *Phrynobatrachus* are to be given precedence over HEMIMANTIDAE Hoffman, 1878 (type genus *Hemimantis* Peters, 1863) and other family-group names based on *Hemimantis*, whenever their type genera are placed in the same family-group taxon.

**Comment on the proposed conservation of *Lycognathophis* Boulenger, 1893**

(Reptilia, Serpentes)

(Case 2877; see BZN 51: 330–331)

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I strongly support this application: favorable actions in such cases, where a junior synonym has dominant usage, are very important in preserving nomenclatural stability.

Island snake faunas have been the subject of considerable recent attention, in part due to the serious economic and ecological effects of the introduction into Guam of the brown tree snake *Boiga irregularis*. *Lycognathophis seychellensis* is a member of the unique endemic herpetofauna of the Seychelles, and is of further interest because of the unusually enlarged anterior teeth of the lower jaw. It would be very unfortunate if its name were to be destabilized for no good reason, and I urge the Commission to accept Smith & Wallach's proposals.

**Comments on the proposed conservation of some mammal generic names first published in Brisson's (1762) *Regnum Animale***

(Case 2928; see BZN 51: 135–146, 266–267, 342–348; 52: 78–93, 187–192)

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The proposal to replace the familiar mammalian generic name *Glis* Brisson, 1762 with the now largely forgotten *Myoxus* Zimmermann, 1780 is a particularly sad

example of the scholastic branch of taxonomy being out of touch with the rest of the world.

The position is put most eloquently in the 1994 *IUCN Red List of Threatened Animals* (1993, p. xiii): 'Some level of taxonomic change is both inevitable and desirable, if new methods and new studies are to be pursued, but taxonomists sometimes appear oblivious to the needs of users of taxonomies. As just one example, sources in Wilson & Reeder (1993) note that the dormouse genus *Glis* Brisson 1762 is invalid and the earliest valid replacement is *Myoxus* Gray 1821 [recte Zimmermann 1780]. Adoption of this name, not used for decades, requires changing the family name from Gliridae to Myoxidae, and denies mammalogists *Glis glis*, a name both familiar and euphonious. The pragmatic taxonomist would not have agonised over the validity or otherwise of eighteenth century names, but kept his own counsel, or petitioned the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature to conserve the familiar name under Article 79 of the Code'.

The problem of the availability of Brisson's mammal generic names was noted as being before the Commission, but still unresolved, by Ellerman & Morrison-Scott, back in 1951 (although there was then no formal application). In the intervening time the most widely acceptable decision on this matter seems to have been made by the people who actually make use of names and write about the animals concerned. There is surely a very strong argument for the retention of *Glis*, and indeed of the other disputed mammalian generic names used in Brisson's (1762) *Regnum Animale*, on the grounds of common usage and the maintenance of stability. Because of its protected and locally endangered status and significance as an environmental indicator species *Glis glis*, the edible or fat dormouse, appears in a vast amount of scientific, popular and educational literature and legislative documentation in Europe. The consequent replacement of the family name GLIRIDAE by MYOXIDAE would also be particularly unwelcome to users of the huge body of recent literature on European fossil rodents.

If the proposed adoption of *Myoxus* solved a knotty taxonomic problem I doubt if there would be such strong objection, but as it stands this seems to be little more than a gratuitous replacement of a very well known and widely used historical name by a lesser known synonym.

#### Additional reference

Groombridge, R. (Ed.). 1993. *1994 IUCN Red List of Threatened Animals*. lvi, 286 pp. IUCN - The World Conservation Union, Gland, Switzerland.

#### (2) M. Freudenthal

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I am strongly in favour of the conservation of Brisson's generic names, especially of the name *Glis*, since I have been working on fossil GLIRIDAE. I think that it would serve the stability of nomenclature.

#### (3) Mieczyslaw Wolsan

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